

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MANAGU 03984 251256Z
ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 L-03 PM-05 COME-00 ACDA-07

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4158

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 3984

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TPHY, NU

SUBJECT: PROPOSED HURRICANE MODIFICATION EXPERIMENT: PROJECT
STORM FURY-ATLANTIC, AUGUST 24-OCTOBER 15, 1977

REF: STATE 194514

1. EMBOFFS HAVE DISCUSSED THE SUBJECT EXPERIMENT WITH THE NICARAGUAN FOREIGN MINISTRY AND WITH THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE'S METEOROLOGICAL SERVICE, DRAWING UPON POINTS IN REFTEL. EMBOFFS TOLD THEIR INTERLOCUTORS THAT USG WISHED TO INFORM GON OF THE PROPOSED TEST AND THAT IT WOULD BE HAPPY TO RECEIVE ANY COMMENT OR QUESTIONS CONCERNING IT.

2. RIGOBERTO TORUNO, HEAD OF FOREIGN MINISTRY'S INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION AFFAIRS SECTION, REFERRED TO HURRICAN FIFI WHICH DEVASTATED HONDURAN COAST IN 1975 AND RECALLED THAT "SOME PAPERS" HAD AT THAT TIME SUGGESTED THAT USG-SPONSORED ATMOSPHERIC TESTINGS MIGHT HAVE CAUSED THE HURRICAN TO STRIKE

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HONDURAS. HE ASKED WHAT USG WOULD DO IF THE NEW SEEDING EXPERIMENT RESULTED IN DAMAGES TO SOME FOREIGN COUNTRY. EMBOFFS RESPONDED THAT USG GIVING CONSIDERATION TO THIS QUESTION EVEN THOUGH IT CONSIDERED THE CHANCES OF SUCH DAMAGE TO BE VERY LOW.

3. LIC. NOEL AGUILAR Z., DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF

METEROLOGICAL SERVICE, COMMENTED THAT HE FELT THE EXPERIMENT MIGHT AFFECT THE CARIBBEAN AND CENTRAL AMERICAN REGION "ENORMOUSLY" BY CREATING A DISEQUILIBRIUM IN THE AREA'S WEATHER. HE REFERRED TO THE MARKED, GENERAL DECLINE IN THE QUANTITY OF RAINFALL WHICH THE CENTRAL AMERICAN REGION HAS EXPERIENCED DURING THE PAST SEVEN YEARS OR SO AND ALSO TO MEXICAN PRESS STORIES WHICH ALLEGEDLY LAID BLAME FOR HURRICANE FIFI AT U.S. DOORSTEPS.

AGUILAR ASSERTED THAT HE DID NOT WISH TO ACCUSE THE USG OF TAMPERING WITH THE WEATHER TO THE DETRIMENT OF OTHER COUNTRIES, YET FELT CONSTRAINED TO MENTION HIS MISGIVINGS ABOUT THE PROPOSED EXPERIMENT.

HE SAID HE WOULD RECOMMEND THAT THE GON ASK THE U.S. NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION (NOAA) TO SEND OFFICIALS TO NICARAGUA TO DISCUSS THE PROPOSED EXPERIMENT IN DETAIL (PER PARA 5, REFTEL).

4. COMMENT: EMBASSY FORESEES STRONG POSSIBILITY THE U.S. WILL RECEIVE BLAME FOR ANY WEATHER-RELATED DISASTER THAT MAY HIT THIS AREA DURING NEXT YEAR OR SO, IF EXPERIMENT TAKES PLACE. AGUILAR'S MISGIVINGS PRESUMABLY REFLECT WIDESPREAD LOCAL BELIEF THAT THE U.S. IS SOMEHOW RESPONSIBLE FOR ALMOST EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS SOUTH OF ITS BORDERS -- REGARDLESS OF WHAT THE TRUTH MAY BE. IF USG CONCLUDES

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THAT RISKS OF EXPERIMENT ARE AS MINIMAL AS NOAA ESTIMATES AND DETERMINES EXPERIMENT TO BE STRONGLY IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST, THEN EMBASSY BELIEVES WE SHOULD NOT BE DISSUADED BY POSSIBLE ADVERSE CRITICISM FROM NICARAGUA.

5. EMBASSY WILL FORWARD ANY FORMAL REQUEST FOR VISIT BY NOAA EXPERTS THAT IT MAY RECEIVE.
RUBENSTEIN

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